

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

County: MARIPOSA

Applicant: SIERRA FOOTHILL CONSERVANCY

Project Title: BOHNA RANCH CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Reference Number: SNC 070193

PROJECT SCOPE

The Sierra Foothill Conservancy will negotiate and purchase a conservation easement on the Bohna Ranch property, near Hornitos, CA. Specifically, the Conservancy will:

- Negotiate purchase price of conservation easement with landowners.
- Purchase the conservation easement.
- Develop and place signage on-site highlighting the project and providing contact information.
- Conduct monitoring efforts on an annual basis to ensure conservation goals are met.
- Conduct education efforts on an annual basis to inform local landowners of the benefits of taking this action on their respective properties.
- Work with property owners to define ongoing management practices to be conducted by the landowners.

The Sierra Foothills Conservancy will utilize this conservation easement as a model for neighboring landowners, and will work with interested parties on the establishment of additional easements in the area.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Finalize Escrow Instructions	June 2008
Complete Baseline Documentation Report	August 2008
Complete Management Plan and Monitoring Protocol	October 2008
Complete and submit six-month progress report to SNC	October 2008
Close escrow and Record Conservation Easement	November 2008 – December 2008
Erect Signage Recognizing Project	January 2009
Send out Press Release	February 2009
Conduct education classes on Ranch – 3 per year	March 2009 – March 2010
Complete and submit progress reports to SNC at six-month intervals	March 2009 – March 2010
Conduct annual monitoring visit	March 2009 – March 2010
Final Report/Final Payment Request	May 2010

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Conservation Easement Acquisition	\$575,000
Escrow Fees, Title Insurance, Closing Costs	\$5,000
Staff and Consultant Costs	\$10,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$590,000

Letters of Support:

- California Farm Bureau Federation

- California Department of Fish and Game
- Mariposa County Resource Conservation District
- Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
- United States Department of Agriculture
- Mariposa County Farm Bureau

Recommendation:

Recommend funding the project at \$590,000, instead of the \$600,000 requested. The \$10,000 for appraisal review by the State has been funded by a different source.

Project Summary

The Sierra Foothill Conservancy (SFC) has been working to protect important lands in the central Sierra Nevada for over eleven years. Through the use of fee title and conservation easement acquisition SFC has successfully protected over fifteen thousand acres. Currently one of the main areas of focus for SFC is the Blue Oak Woodland and Annual Grasslands of Mariposa County which is made up predominately of family-owned, working ranches. These working ranches and the water resources and natural habitats present on the land are increasingly threatened by development. A great many ranches have already been lost to subdivision. The growth of Merced and other nearby communities threatens to dramatically increase development of the region.

The Bohna Ranch Conservation Easement project will place a conservation easement on one of these threatened ranches. The Bohna Ranch is comprised of 840 acres of oak studded rolling foothills in unincorporated Mariposa County, near the community of Hornitos. The Ranch is an important conservation target because of its location, water resources, natural habitat, and the desire of the landowner to remain in ranching and steward the property. The landowner, Cindy Bohna, wishes to sell a conservation easement on the Ranch at a bargain price. The landowner is very interested in protecting the wildlife habitat on the property. Proceeds from the bargain sale of the conservation easement will allow the landowner to continue the ranching operation and stewardship of the property. With out the sale of the conservation easement the landowner would likely be forced to sell the property for development.

The Bohna Ranch possesses significant water and natural resources that will be protected through the completion of this project. The Ranch is located within the Mariposa Stream Group Watershed. There are two streams on the property with some year round flows in most years. Several springs, seeps, and seasonal wetlands are also present on the property. The Ranch is important habitat for a wide variety of native plants and wildlife and may be home to several listed species. The Ranch consists of a mixture of four habitat types: Non-native Grassland, Blue Oak Woodland, Valley Foothill Riparian Woodland, and Seasonal Wetlands. In addition the property is adjacent to lands identified by the California Department of Fish and Game as potential conservation projects. SFC hopes to use the successful completion of this project to encourage adjacent landowners to explore conservation options.

The Bohna Ranch project addresses goals two, three, five and six of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Program Goals. Additionally, the landowner has agreed to allow up to three educational classes per year on the property. The classes will be open to the public and cover topics such as native plants and wildlife, natural history and geology, and rangeland management practices.

The total project budget is estimated to be \$1,049,750. The landowner will contribute an estimated \$425,000 in the form of a bargain sale of the Conservation Easement. SFC will contribute \$24,750. The grant request is for \$600,000. The funds requested in the grant application will be used to purchase the Conservation Easement at a bargain price (\$575,000) and to pay for related expenses such as baseline documentation, legal fees, and escrow fees.